



PLECTORHYNCHIA LANCEOLATA: *Coold.*

J. & E. Coold del. et lith.

C. Hillmandel Imp.

PLECTORHYNCHA LANCEOLATA, *Gould.*

Lanceolate Honey-eater.

Plectorhyncha lanceolata, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 153; and in Syn. of Birds of Australia, Part IV.

THE Liverpool Plains and the country immediately to the northward thereof are, I believe, the only portions of the Australian continent in which this bird has been seen. I found it rather sparingly dispersed over the forests bordering the rivers Mokai and Namoi, and it appeared to increase in number as I descended the latter stream towards the interior. It was generally observed alone, or in pairs, keeping almost exclusively to the *Acaciæ* and *Eucalypti*. Its chief food is the pollen of flowers and insects, for the procuring of which among the blossoms, and for constructing its beautiful nest, its pointed spine-like bill is admirably adapted. I find it stated in my notes taken on the spot, that this bird possesses the peculiar habit of sitting motionless among the thickest foliage of the topmost branches of the highest trees, where it cannot be seen without the closest observation, although its immediate locality is indicated by its powerful whistling note; I have also heard these notes uttered by the bird while on the wing. Upon one occasion only did I discover its nest, which was suspended from the extreme tip of a branch of a *Casuarina* overhanging the stream, and in which the female was sitting, as represented in the Plate. The nest is outwardly composed of grasses, interwoven with wool and the cotton-like texture of flowers. The eggs are two in number, rather lengthened in shape, being eleven and a half lines long by eight lines broad; they are of a flesh-white, very minutely sprinkled with reddish buff, forming an indistinct zone at the larger end. So closely do the sexes resemble each other in colour, that dissection alone will enable us to distinguish them; the male, however, rather exceeds the female in size.

The young, of which I killed several specimens in the month of January, had even at that early age assumed the general markings of the adult; and from the circumstance of there being fully-fledged young and eggs at the same time, proves that these birds rear at least two broods in the season.

Crown of the head, ear-coverts, and back of the neck mottled with black and white, a longitudinal mark of black running down the centre of each feather; throat and under surface greyish white, the stem of each feather, which ends lanceolate, pure white; back, wings and tail light brown; irides brown; bill dark bluish horn-colour; legs and feet light blue.

The figures are those of a male and a female, and a nest, of the natural size.